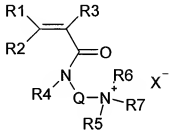
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (**Currently Amended**) An associative amphoteric polymer having an average molecular weight greater than 50,000 g/mol comprising:

- between 0.005 and 10 mole % of at least one acrylamide-derived cationic monomer containing a hydrophobic chain and with the general formula:



where

R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, independently, a hydrogen or an alkyl chain containing 1 to 4 carbons

Q: an alkyl chain containing 1 to 8 carbons

R7: an alkyl or arylalkyl chain containing 8 to 30 carbons,

X: a counterion with a negative charge

- between 1 and ~~99.9~~ 30 mole % of at least one anionic monomer presenting acrylic, vinyl, maleic, fumaric or allyl functionalities and containing a carboxy, phosphonate or sulfonate group and/or their ammonium salts or alkaline-earth metal salts or alkali metal salts
- and between 1 and 99 mole % of at least one acrylamide-derived non-ionic hydrosoluble monomer.

2. (**Previously Presented**) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 1 wherein the anionic monomer is selected from the group consisting of acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, crotonic acid, maleic acid, fumaric acid, 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid, vinylsulfonic acid, vinylphosphonic acid, allylsulfonic acid, allylphosphonic acid and/or their water-soluble salts of an alkali metal, alkaline-earth metal and ammonium.

3. (**Currently Amended**) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 1 wherein the acrylamide-derived non-ionic hydrosoluble monomer comprises a water-soluble vinyl monomer selected from the group consisting of acrylamide and methacrylamide, N-isopropylacrylamide, N-N-dimethylacrylamide, and N-methylolacrylamide~~, N-vinylformamide, N-vinyl acetamide, N-vinylpyridine and/or N-vinylpyrrolidone~~.

4. (**Previously Presented**) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 1 wherein said polymer is branched and/or cross-linked and additionally comprises a branching and/or cross-linking agent.

5. (**Previously Presented**) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 4 wherein the branching and/or cross-linking agent is selected from the group consisting of N-methylol acrylamide, methylene bis acrylamide, allyl ethers of sucrose, diacrylates, divinyls, diallylated compounds, methyl triallyl ammonium chloride, triallylamine, tetraallyl ammonium chloride, tetra allyl oxyethane and tetra allyl ethylene diamine.

6. (**Previously Presented**) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 1 in dry, powder or granulate form.

7. (**Currently Amended**) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 1 comprising:

- between 0.005 and 10 mole % of a hydrophobic cationic monomer,
- between 5 and 90 mole % of an acidic component comprising one or more of: acrylic acid, methacrylic acid and 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid and their salts,
- and between 5 and 90 mole % of at least one acrylamide-derived non-ionic hydrosoluble monomer amide chosen from the group consisting of acrylamide, methacrylamide, N-isopropylacrylamide, and N-N-dimethylacrylamide~~, N-vinylformamide, N-vinyl acetamide and N-vinylpyrrolidone~~.

8. (**Previously Presented**) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 1 wherein the acrylamide-derived hydrophobic cationic monomer is selected from the group consisting of N-acrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-dodecyl ammonium chloride, N-methacrylamidopropyl-

N, N-dimethyl-N-dodecyl ammonium chloride, N-acrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-dodecyl ammonium bromide, N-methacrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-dodecyl ammonium bromide, N-acrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-octadecyl ammonium chloride, N-methacrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-octadecyl ammonium chloride, N-acrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-octadecyl ammonium bromide and N-methacrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-octadecyl ammonium bromide.

9. (**Previously Presented**) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 1 further comprising at least one other monomer, whether ionic or not, hydrosoluble or not, accounting for less than 20 mole % and selected from the group consisting of monomers of dialkylaminoalkyl (meth)acrylate, dialkylaminoalkyl (meth)acrylamide, diallylamine, methyldiallylamine and their quaternary ammonium salts or acid salts, acrylamide derivatives, derivatives of acrylic acid, hydroxyalkyl acrylates and methacrylates, allyl derivatives, styrene acrylate esters containing ethoxylated chains and acrylate esters not terminating with an alkyl or arylalkyl chain.

10. (**Currently Amended**) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 1 having an average molecular weight greater than 100,000 g/mol .

11. (**Previously Presented**) An aqueous composition containing as a thickening agent at least one polymer as claimed in claim 1.

12. (**Canceled**)

13. (**Original**) The associative amphoteric polymer of claim 1, wherein R7 is an alkyl or arylalkyl chain containing 8 to 20 carbons.

14. (**Original**) The associative amphoteric polymer of claim 1 wherein X is a halide selected from the group consisting of bromide, chloride, iodide and fluoride.

15. (**Currently Amended**) The associative amphoreteric polymer of claim 7, comprising:
(a) between 0.01 and 5 mole % of the hydrophobic cationic monomer,

(b) between 10 and 60 mole % of an acidic component comprising one or more of: acrylic acid, methacrylic acid and 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid and their salts, and
(c) between 35 and 90 mole % of at least one acrylamide-derived non-ionic hydrosoluble monomer~~amide~~ chosen from the group consisting of acrylamide, methacrylamide, N-isopropylacrylamide, and N-N-dimethylacrylamide~~, N-vinylformamide, N-vinyl acetamide and N-vinylpyrrolidone~~.

16. (**Currently Amended**) The associative amphor~~e~~teric polymer of claim 15, comprising:
(a) between 0.02 and 2 mole % of the hydropho~~l~~bic cationic monomer,
(b) between 10 and 50 mole % ~~%~~ of said acidic component and
(c) between 48 and 90 mole % of said acrylamide-derived non-ionic hydrosoluble monomer ~~amide.~~.

17. (**Currently Amended**) The associative amphor~~e~~teric polymer of claim 10 having an average molecular weight greater than 200,000 g/mol.